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Corpus-based analysis of lexical cohesion in Chinese postgraduates' English academic writing and its pedagogical implications

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English academic writing and its pedagogical implications

As a key feature in the creation of coherent texts (Tanskanen, 2006), lexical cohesion is of importance for students' academic performance. Chinese students have been identified as lacking awareness of lexical cohesiveness in English academic writing (Zhang, 2018). In order to inform pedagogy in English for academic purposes (EAP) for these students, this paper used a corpus-based approach to conduct qualitative analysis of lexical cohesive devices used in Chinese postgraduates' writing at a UK university. A framework for the analysis of lexical cohesion was developed in two corpora, incorporating a new subcategory of lexical cohesive device alongside modifications of existing categories. Analysis of the corpora identified homogeneities of lexical cohesion such as context sensitivity, dominant use of repetition, and use of modifiers to indicate lexical cohesive relations, suggesting the value of context-based pedagogy and the need to teach lexical cohesive devices with appropriate exemplars.

Keywords: lexical cohesion; Chinese EFL learners; EAP pedagogical implication

Introduction

Cohesive devices help create the connectedness of texts (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, p. 2), which contribute to developing the meaningfulness of texts and impact upon communicative effectiveness (Tanskanen, 2006, p. 1). Based on the forms of expressing cohesive relations, cohesion is divided into grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, pp. 5-6). As with this mainstream practice of putting models of cohesion to use, this paper explores the features of inter-clausal lexical cohesive devices used in creating cohesive academic written texts within a specific academic discipline, in order to provide English for Academic Purposes (EAP) pedagogical implications to Chinese students as English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners who have been identified in general as lacking awareness of lexical cohesiveness in English academic writing (Zhang, 2018).

Lexical cohesion is defined as relations in which two or more lexical items connect to each other and to other cohesive devices, in order to “build the continuity of the text” (Flowerdew & Mahlberg, 2009, p. 1), in general consisting of two categories: reiteration and collocation. Other sub-categories within these two categories vary among models of lexical cohesion in previous studies. Therefore, this study also developed its own classification of lexical cohesion for this specific research context.

In terms of the application of cohesion in teaching and learning, researchers have studied the use of cohesive devices across a variety of EAP contexts as well as in both native and non-native writing in foreign and second language settings (e.g. Ong, 2011; Sinicrope, 2007; Zhang, 2000). These researchers without exception believe that lexical cohesion is vital in textual cohesion, playing a crucial role in text interpretation whether the language user is a native or a non-native speaker (henceforth NNS) of English. However, surprisingly, few

studies solely focus on lexical cohesion in higher education students' actual on course writing when such studies have the potential to inform EAP pedagogy. Furthermore, there have not been any such studies in the UK higher context, though Chinese students are already the largest subgroup of international students in the UK academic settings (British Council, 2017). In order to remedy these limitations, this study focuses on a detailed analysis of lexical cohesion in two corpora of excerpts from Chinese students' module assignments and MA dissertations submitted to MA TESOL and MA Applied Linguistics for TESOL programmes at a UK university.

Methodology

52 module assignment samples (17,538 words) and 45 dissertation excerpts (19,148 words) from 9 dissertation texts were collected. Then, due to context sensitivity of lexical cohesion (Xi, 2010, p. 143), a suitable model of lexical cohesion was developed based on previous studies for the manual analysis of lexical cohesive devices used in the corpora (see Table 1). Furthermore, qualitative analyses of specific lexical cohesive relations identified in the corpora were conducted. The reason for adopting the manual analysis method was that lexical cohesive relations are based on semantic grounds, which cannot (at least at the moment) be identified with the assistance of such concordance tools (Hoffmann, 2012, p. 101). The analytical table is demonstrated in Table 2.

Table 1. Classification of lexical cohesion in the present study

Category	Definition
Repetition	This category has been divided into two types in the present study: simple repetitions (i.e. the same lexical item) and complex repetitions with derivational variations or grammatical changes.
Synonymy	The meanings of the lexical items can be interpreted straightforwardly or contextually as being similar.
Antonymy	The meanings of the lexical items can be interpreted straightforwardly or contextually as being opposite.
Hyperonymy /hyponymy /meronymy	A hyperonymic relation is defined as the “relation which holds between a more general, or superordinate, lexeme and a more specific, or subordinate, lexeme” (Hoffmann, 2012, p. 90). There are two types of hyperonymic relations in the present study: kindwhole and part-whole relations. Hyponymy and meronymy refer to whole-kind and whole-part relations respectively.
Signalling nouns (SNs)	The category of SNs in lexical cohesion includes SN-like nouns, especially the general nouns (Halliday & Hasan, 1976), the shell nouns (Schmid, 2000) and the discourse-based signalling nouns (Flowerdew & Forest, 2015). The general features of SNs are: SNs have ‘semantic generality’, can be used as ‘containers’ for more specific contents, and can encapsulate complex information into highly condensed concepts with simple lexical items.
Identity	The full name for this category is ‘other relations with identity of reference’ (identity), dealing with other co-referential relations which are not included in the existing categories.
Collocation	Collocation comprises the semantic relations between lexical items beyond the clause which are generally known to be part of some larger objects or situations and frequently co-occur.

Table 2. An analytical table for the manual analysis of lexical cohesion (from sample F9 in the failed group)

text	repetition	synonymy	hyperonymy	hyponymy	meronymy	SNs	identity	antonymy	collocation
Part One Target Group									
This assessment tool aims at a group of business-major students	group		business – major				target group – students		
who are joining an English training program,									students – training program
after which they are going to become interpreters and bilingual sales agents in an international furniture fair .							Business-major students – interpreters and bilingual sales agents		English – interpreters business – sales agents

As it can be seen in Table 2, the left-hand column of the analysis sheet specifies the clauses in the sample while the other columns demonstrate the lexical cohesive categories of the relations and their corresponding cohesive pairs found within the text. The analysed lexical items in column one (left) were coloured or highlighted in the analysis for the convenience of retrieval and analysis (see Table 3 for the highlighting system of the manual analysis). Each pair recognised was allocated to its corresponding category column, and a hyphen was introduced between elements in that pair. The cohesive pairs in a clause were placed in the cells which were in the same row of that clause cell. For example, in table 2 above, because *interpreters* and *sales agents* were in the same clause, the collocation pairs *English – interpreters* and *business – sales agents* were placed in the same cell in the same column.

Table 3. Highlighting system in the present manual lexical cohesion analysis

lexical cohesion category	example
bold is for repetition	speaking – speaking
orange is for synonymy	test – assessment
dark red is for hyperonymy	English – language
green is for hyponymy	language – English
red is for meronymy	English skills – listening
highlight grey is for signalling nouns (“//” is used to divide clauses)	Literature on how to respond to the inappropriateness of arguments clearly in teacher feedback is scant, //and pedagogical ESL suggestions for writing teachers on how to deal with such issues could be a subject for further studies.
blue is for identity	test – element
purple is for antonymy	learning – teaching
highlight yellow is for collocation	lecture – student

Results and discussion

The appropriate examples (see Table 4 below) for each category will be displayed respectively at first to demonstrate the proper use of each lexical cohesive device in texts. EAP pedagogical implications will be provided following the examples to give further suggestions for Chinese students regarding their study of using lexical cohesion in academic writing.

Table 4. Examples of lexical cohesive categories in the present study

<p>(1) there has been a lot scholars and researchers// who researched ...// Most of these researche[r]s ...// Thus, research questions ...</p> <p>(from sample D6C3M) (Grammatical typos in the original sample text are corrected in “[]” where applicable)</p>
<p>(2) the learners// The course will be taken by 10 to 12 Chinese young adults (late teens or early twenties) as part of their preparation for meeting the level of English language proficiency required for admission to UK universities.// All of the students wish to achieve band score at least 5.5 in IELTS speaking ... (M12P)</p> <p>(3)</p> <p>The second part reflects the approach of task-based analysis, which helps to ensure the course to possess a high degree of real-life relevance ... // ... they can answer the questions according to the occasions where they cooperate with Chinese clients. This could also be conducive to figure out the tasks they are likely to carry out with foreigners. (D6)</p> <p>(4) As an ending of the course, the department of human resource (HR) in the company wants to find out the participants’ learning outcome.// Therefore, an assessment tool is required to design not only for evaluating achievement relevant to the short-term program, but also for deciding the final list of employees. (P5)</p>
<p>(5) The students may even find it difficult to notice the errors when speaking English. Thus the perceived needs of students are, [...] explicit teaching of the thinking difference which is accountable for the errors, a raised awareness of the thinking processes and the thinking habits in speaking English to encode time information in verbs and gender information in the third person pronouns.</p>

Therefore, the syllabus is designed to achieve the goal of the “entrenchment” of a chain of thinking processes that can generate **correctly**-tensed and gender-referred speaking English. (M1P)

- (6) There are totally 22 students in class, // among which 16 are **girls** // and 6 are **boys**. (D9P)
- (7) But even where performance test materials appear to be very **realistic** compared to traditional paper-and-pencil tests, it is clear that the test performance does not exist for its own sake. However, it is necessary to have a procedure that is fair to all candidates, and elicits a scorable performance, even if this means involving the candidates in somewhat **artificial** behaviour. (D2)
- (8) It represents a particular realization of communicative language **teaching**. // ... they can enjoy the activities and create more active **learning** atmosphere with satisfactory effect. (M7P)
- (9) However, the uneven representation of values could be a feature of the data set and the individual **speakers**, ... // ... This unpredictability in terms of difficulty is exacerbated by the individual **listener** who has their own strengths and weaknesses. (D8C5C)

- (10) This dissertation is a study focusing on the exploration of law students’ past **English** learning experiences and spoken English issues in seminars through their reflection on seminar learning in the LLM programme. ... Ethnographic methods offer this study a holistic approach to ... systematically document[ing] the influences of students’ background on their seminar learning in a rich, contextualised detail with the aim of suggesting proper measures to deal with **language** issues in law seminars. (D7C1I)

- (11) **Chapter One Introduction**//... With regards to peer feedback in **this dissertation**, it refers to the activity where students read each other's essay and then express not only negative criticism but also supportive and appreciated evaluation. (D13C1)
- (12) because essays and reports are usually regarded as the most popular **assessment forms** in academic courses in western countries.// They may also have **exams** but compared with short exam answers, it will cost more time like several weeks to write **essays** as assignments for course work. (D11C1I)
- (13) Supplementary education, also known as “shadow education” or “private tutoring” has been expanded rapidly in **the globe** since this century. This phenomenon has first been developed in **East Asia** and has become externally visible throughout **Asia** as well as in **other world regions** in the present days. (D12C1I)
- (14) We can see this through an exquisite job done by Quirk et al. , which categorized number classes of nouns mainly into four groups// ... Nouns in **group (A)** are occurring only in singular form, which include (Aa) mass nouns such as gold, music, (Ab) abstract adjective heads like the unreal, and (Ac) some proper nouns like Henry, the Thames.// On the contrary, nouns in **group (B)** are occurring only in plural forms, which can be distinguished into five subgroups... (D2C2L)
- (15) From the information which is attained from the interviews, the **overview** of participants['] perspective on peer feedback is that// **five** of the eight students (Students A, B, C, D, E and Student G) felt that this activity was helpful. (D13C4F)
- (16) With its development, the popular and dominant ELT methods in China are **grammar translation and audio lingual**,// [and] they are 2 **ways** that make great contribution to language teaching. (D6C1I)
- (17) **The law students** [...] have at least two seminars in a week [...].// The size of seminars varies:// some seminars are quite small, only consisting of 6-8 **people** ... (excerpt 4)

- (18) For example, if only **grade one** is analysed, perhaps the higher grades start to introduce implicature// because designers suppose these **freshmen** do not acquire sufficient pragmalinguistic knowledge ... (D14C3M)
- (19) This means that more university **applicants** will choose IELTS examination to attain a place in the course.// If **students** want to apply for a Tier4 general student visa, their IELTS overall score has to reach the band 5.5 and above... (D4C1I)
- (20) This assessment tool takes the form of a speaking test, devised as a progress test based on the syllabus// which aims to entrench the automatic cognitive processing to encode time information into verbs and gender information into third personal pronouns for Chinese learners of **English**.// Moreover, ... the task also purposes [proposes] an evaluation of the extent// to which the students can use **the target language** to communicate and co-construct conversation regarding familiar topics. (D1)
- (21) it is common that researchers prefer **questionnaires** rather than interviews,// since perhaps the former tools can be used to attain information from a large number of **participants** ... (D13C3M)
- (22) Chapter Two **Literature** Review// This chapter will look at relevant **research** based on theoretical research as well as the investigation related to peer feedback from students' perspective, including Asian students, Chinese and Japanese and European learners from Spain. (D13C2L)

Repetition

The findings suggest that Chinese students tend to use simple repetitions rather than complex repetitions, indicating the necessity of introducing complex repetitions to students, in order to raise their awareness of avoiding overusing simple repetitions which may make texts seem uninteresting.

In example 1, research-stemmed repetitions form a chain with three repetitive pairs: *researchers – researched – researchers – research*. Sharing the same word stem – *research*, these pairs may potentially be interpreted as being lexically cohesive by readers. On the other hand, these research-stemmed lexical items are slightly different in forms, which helps to reduce the monotony of the text, representing a useful example to teach the use of complex repetitions.

Synonymy and antonymy

The categories of synonymy and antonymy are combined for discussion because of similar divisions based on two criteria: whether the lexical items in a synonymous or antonymic pair belong to the same word class; or whether the meanings of the lexical items can be interpreted straightforwardly as being similar or opposite. Specifically, synonymy/antonymy is divided into synonymy/antonymy in the traditional sense and near-synonymy/antonymy.

Example 2 demonstrates a synonymous relation in the traditional sense between *learners* and *students*. *Learners* is replaced by *students* in the following clause. It is not difficult to interpret their synonymous relation as they have similar word meanings: *learners* represent people who are learning something (OED Online, 2019), and *students* denote people who are learning at school (OED Online, 2019). Furthermore, they share the same referent, *10 to 12 Chinese young adults*. These two points make it clear that *learners* and *students* form a synonymous relation in example

2.

By contrast, examples 3 and 4 demonstrate near-synonymous relations from two perspectives. In example 3, although both items express the meaning of providing something good to make other things happen (OED Online, 2019), *helps* (noun) and *conducive* (adjective) belong to different word classes. According to criterion one, they are regarded as near-synonyms in example 3. In example 4, *outcome* and *achievement* form a near-synonymous relation because of sharing the same referent, the participants' learning results; and their contextually similar meanings: *outcomes* refers to the participants' learning result of the course, and *achievement* refers to the good result of the participants' learning in the course, both denoting the participants' learning results. However, *achievement* adds a positive feature to the results while *outcomes* expresses a neutral meaning. Therefore, they are regarded as near-synonyms.

In terms of antonymy, in addition to the introduction of the two types of antonymy mentioned above, this category can also be categorised into four subcategories according to the opposite

relations between two lexical items in an antonymic pair, three of which being recognised in the present study and discussed with examples below.

The first sub-category is complementary antonymy, denoting non-gradable binary contrast between two antonyms.

In example 5, *errors* and *correctly* are a near-antonymic pair as *errors* is a noun while *correctly* is an adjective, and they express contradictory meanings in this context: *errors* refers to the inappropriate contents in students' spoken English, whereas *correctly* in *correctly-tensed* denotes the appropriate use of verb tense in students' speaking English, which in general also refers to the contents in students' spoken English. Therefore, *errors* and *correctly* are contradictory in meanings here, demonstrating the feature of antonymy as lexical cohesive devices that two lexical items from different word classes can form near-antonymic relations when expressing contradictory meanings in a specific context.

The pair *girls* – *boys* in example 6 is much more straightforward than *errors* – *correctly* regarding the contradictory meanings of the lexical items. The former items are semantically regarded as contradictory in general, while the contradictory meanings of the latter need interpretations in specific contexts.

The second sub-category is contrary antonymy, referring to relations between gradable antonyms. In example 7, *realistic* and *artificial* constitute a contrary pair, as the former is related to the reality or authenticity, while the latter means not authentic. The interesting point is the use of the surrounding indicators implying the comparable sense between *realistic* and *artificial*, such as *very*, *compared to* and *somewhat*, which make it clearer that *realistic* and *artificial* are gradable in terms of their contrary meanings, providing a good suggestion for teaching gradable antonyms with such indicators in the co-texts.

The third sub-category is converse antonymy, which typically exists in two situations: procedural verbs and nouns expressing reciprocal social roles. In the first situation, the actions expressed by the verbs are involved in a unidimensional movement from two perspectives: that of the source and that of the goal (Murphy, 2003). In the second situation, one social role cannot exist without the other. In example 8, *teaching* and *learning* form a near-antonymic converse pair. Firstly, the two items are near antonyms because *teaching* is a noun while *learning* is an adjective. Further, the items express the same procedure from teachers' perspective (the source) and students' perspective (the goal) respectively. Therefore, *teaching* and *learning* are converse antonyms in this context. In example 9, *speakers* and *listener* are two social roles which are interdependent. As Crystal (2008) commented, there is symmetry of dependence in the reciprocal social role. The object of the *speakers* is the *listener*, and the object of the *listener* is the contents that the *speakers* say. Both *speakers* and *listener* cannot exist without each other. The two examples show the interdependence between two lexical items in a converse relation in two typical situations,

which gives practical suggestions to design appropriate examples for teaching converse antonyms.

In general, teachers can illustrate each type of antonyms with exemplars such as the examples above at first, and design matching activities where learners need to match listed antonymic relationships with individual sentences in which different antonyms are used.

Hyperonymy, hyponymy and meronymy

Hyperonymy, hyponymy and meronymy are included under the umbrella term ‘superordinate relations’. Hyperonymic relation is divided into two types. Example 10 refers to a kind-whole relation, *English – language*, while example 11 denotes a part-whole relation, *Chapter One Introduction – this dissertation*.

The relation between hyponymy and hyperonymy is that a hyperonym consists of several types of hyponyms. In example 12, *assessment forms* and *exams* form a hyponymic relation as the more general item *assessment forms* appear before the more specific item *exams*. A co-hyponymic pair is also identified within the same category:

exams and *essays* are two kinds of *assessment forms*, and therefore are co-hyponymic.

The relation between meronymy and hyperonymy is that a hyperonym is made up of several parts regarded as meronyms. In example 13, *the globe* is the whole entity while *East Asia*, *Asia* and *other world regions* are parts of *the globe*. Therefore, the meronymic pair is *the globe – East Asia/Asia/other world regions*. In example 14, *group (A)* and *group (B)* are parts of the four groups of ‘number classes of nouns’ in sample D2C2L. As these two items occur in two clauses, *group (A)* and *group (B)* are regarded as co-meronyms. It is noticeable that the hyperonym of *group (A)* and *group (B)* also appear in the surrounding clause, which is *the groups of number classes of nouns*. This indicates that the hyperonym and its meronyms co-occur in certain contexts, which gives the EAP implication for teaching meronyms that providing the hyperonym of the co-meronyms can contribute to readers’ correct interpretation of the meronymic relation between two lexical items in texts.

It is recommendable for teachers to introduce these superordinate cohesive devices in EAP classes with examples as the six ones above as they are not often used by Chinese students (Zhang, 2000), probably with fun activities, such as crosswords of a set of hyperonyms with their corresponding hyponyms and meronyms.

Signalling nouns

The analysis of SNs includes its surrounding grammatical structures or modifiers because the surrounding elements contribute to confining the contextual meaning and signifying the co-

referential function of signalling nouns, and therefore guiding the readers to decode the complex information that the SNs encapsulate.

In example 15, the first SN is *activity* in the structure of ‘*this* + SN’ which refers back to *peer feedback*. The use of the determiner *this* indicates that *activity* is used as an anaphor to replace the previous more specific nominal phrase *peer feedback*. The second SN is *overview* in the structure of ‘*the* + noun + *of*’. The referent of *overview* is the whole succeeding clause *five ... helpful*. The usage of the SN *overview* is a demonstration par excellence of the encapsulating function of SNs by summarising a complicated stretch of text into a smaller nominal phrase, which shows a more sophisticated way of expressing the lexical cohesiveness between segments in the same text than the use of repetitive devices.

As for example 16, what is worth mentioning is the use of a pre-modifier, cardinal number 2, prior to the SN *ways*, which has another function of describing a specific characteristic of *ways*.

In general, when used as anaphorical cohesive devices, SNs are normally preceded by determiners, such as *these*, or other modifiers, such as cardinal numbers. Another feature regarding using SNs as lexical cohesive devices is that the contextual meaning of SNs is dependent on their referents, while the SNs express more general meanings of the referents. This feature is demonstrated explicitly when GNs are used in texts, displayed in example 17. *People* is a GN which refers back to *the law students*. The use of *people* as a GN provides a valuable pedagogical implication regarding the teaching of GNs. In example 17, the contextual meaning of *people* is provided by the prior use of *the law students*, which suggests that GNs should be used when it is clear for the readers to decode their contextual meaning. Otherwise, the overuse of GNs may result in the vagueness of the text and disconnections between segments in texts, which may further create difficulties for readers’ comprehension of the overall text (Wu, 2010). Overall, the use of SNs in texts is context-based. Related teaching activities device need to involve exercises with examples.

Identity

In Halliday and Matthiessen's study (2014), some lexical items which form cohesive relations in the repetition and synonymy categories have been described as having “identity of reference” (p. 645) which is the source of the name for this new category here. ‘Identity’ is used in a double sense: ‘identity’ denotes that the lexical items in one pair share the same referent; and the lexical items can demonstrate different identities of the same referent.

Example 18 includes an identity pair *grade one* – *these freshmen*, in which *grade one* refers to the whole group of students who attend the first level of classes at school. This interpretation of *grade one* is supported by the anaphorical use of *these freshmen* in the succeeding clause, as the meaning of *freshmen* is first-year students (OED Online, 2019), and

the determiner *these* indicates that *freshmen* is used as an anaphor to refer back to *grade one*. Therefore, *grade one* and *these freshmen* form a coreferential relation which is the first type of the identity category. This pair can be used as a good example for teachers to explain the use of co-referential relations between identity devices.

As for example 19, the use of *applicants* and *students* forms the second type of identity relation which refers to the relation between two lexical items expressing different identities to the same referent in the same text. Particularly, *applicants* emphasises one identity of the referents who request to study in a course; while *students* imply another identity of the referents who have been already learning at school. This example provides a good demonstration of using two lexical items to express different identities of the same referent(s), which not only creates the cohesiveness in the text, but also adds more information to the referent(s) in an economic way.

Furthermore, the second point will be discussed with another example. In example 20, the lexical items *English* and *the target language* create an identity pair, in which the former specifies the contextual meaning of the latter. That is to say, *English* is regarded as *the target language* for Chinese learners in this context. This coreferential relation between *English* and *the target language* generate based on this specific context, which exactly demonstrates the highly context-sensitive feature of the identity relations.

Collocation

Collocation has been divided into two sub-categories: activity-related collocation and elaborative collocation in this study. The elaborative collocational pairs have been identified more frequently than the activity-related collocational pairs in the corpus analysis. The reason for this observation may lie in the loose definition of elaborative collocation which only requires two lexical items elaborating or expanding on the same topic, while the activity-related collocation entails the lexical items to be elements of the same activity. Example 21 shows an activity-related collocational relation between *questionnaires* and *participants*. The justification for this interpretation is that in the activity of filling in the questionnaires, *participants* are the ‘people’ who take the action, and *questionnaires* is the ‘thing’ which is the object of the action. That is to say, *participants* and *questionnaires* are two elements (i.e. ‘people’ and ‘thing’) in the ‘activity’, which, therefore, form an activity-related collocational pair.

Example 22 demonstrates the elaborative collocation relations. *Literature* and *research* form an elaborative collocational pair because *literature* triggers the *research* frame, which indicates the occurrence of *research* in the succeeding clause. *Literature* refers to the information relating to the subject *peer feedback*, and *research* denotes the detailed study of the same subject from two different angles which are *the theoretical research* and *students’ perspectives*. The content of *research* provides the information which is included in the

literature. Therefore, both *research* and *literature* are interpreted as elaborating on the topic of research on peer feedback.

It is recommended for the teachers to use them for the teaching of collocation, as these types of collocational relations in these examples are activity-centred or topiccentred, which suggests a greater difficulty of explaining their use out of context only with word meanings of the lexical items.

Conclusion

Compared with studies focusing on misuse of lexical cohesive devices (e.g. Zhang, 2000; Ong, 2011), this study has investigated the appropriate use of lexical cohesion in Chinese postgraduates' writing in UK academic settings, using a tailored framework of lexical cohesion and qualitative analysis of two corpora. The results of this analysis are seen as a useful starting point regarding providing appropriate examples of lexical cohesive devices used in texts for Chinese students' study of such devices, which have hopefully shed some more light on the nature of Chinese students' academic writing regarding their study of lexical cohesion, and the ongoing study of EFL students' writing as a whole.

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